Testimony of Michael Mercuriano, Chairmen West Haven Train Station Committee, Transportation Committee Meeting, Feb. 4, 2013, Bill # 696, West Haven Train Station Garage

Michael Mercuriano, 74 Oxbow Lane, West Haven, Ct. 06516

203-804-7124 Open for questions

Good Morning representatives of Transportation Committee,

My committee and I have been part of this project since its inception. I would like to share some facts with you today that we find relevant to Bill # 696. Please feel free to ask me any questions.

The garage has been in the plan since beginning it was a major factor to project "To get more cars off the road, to get more people using Mass Transit and to supply more parking for commuters in the New Haven, Milford Region."

Fact, the garage was bonded along with the station, 130million dollars to be exact.

Fact, the current monies spent to our estimation per DOT somewhere around 105.56million dollars

Fact, a remainder of some 25.5million dollars is in the coffers of DOT

Fact, our committee has estimates on this garage to cost under 10million dollars

Fact, On April 21, 2010 at a Metro North Commuter Council Meeting Chairmen James Cameron asked Jim Redecker, DOT, why the planned garage was not to be built. Mr. Redecker stated the town wanted to first consider a parking facility as part of Transit Oriented Development.

Fact, as of today there is no plan in the City of West Haven what so ever, for any type of parking facility.

Fact, The Mayor of West Haven is now saying that the DOT told him they would not build the station unless garage was cut out.

Fact, The commuter losses again and so does the entire City of West Haven when this station opens, the commuter with still not have enough parking. The local business people and residents will have to deal with the car overflow coming in.

Fact, This is not a small station this is a HUB, 11 car length platforms, 3500sqft station with an over the track walk, capable of HANDING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, STATE OF THE ART FROM ITS BEGINNING PLAN, WITH GARAGE, that runs in a rectangular fashion alongside the platforms for convenience and safety TOTAL PARKING FOR 1100 CARS.

Conclusion, THE LAND IS THERE OWED BY THE STATE AND PAID FOR, THE DESIGN PLANS ARE THERE OWED BY THE STATE AND PAID FOR, The MONEY IS THERE AT DOT FOR CONSTUTION, THE ABSOLUTE NEED IS HERE AND NOW! PLEASE LETS GET THIS GARAGE BUILT NOW! THANK YOU

XAISO A FACT THAT THIS LIAND WAS TAKED BY Emine!

WEST HAVEN — Gov. M. Jodi Rell stood at the future home of the West Haven train station Thursday afternoon and announced \$103 million in funding for construction of the project.

As she made the announcement, a Metro-North train roared by in the background.

"Not only will construction of this new station create jobs, the presence of the station just two blocks from the center of West Haven will have major economic implications for miles and miles around the area," Rell said.

The governor's recommendation of \$103 million for the major transportation project is expected to gain approval when the state Bond Commission meets Sept. 25.

In her remarks, Rell noted that there is not a lot of money to go around this year, but said she is committed to making the West Haven train station project a priority for funding. She noted that construction of the new station — on what she called "one of the busiest commuter railroads in the world" — will ease congestion on state highways, thus making roads safer, reducing air pollution and revitalizing local economies.

"That's good financial news for commuters, good clean air news for the environment and good rush hour news for our crowded roads and highways," she said.

State Department of Transportation Commissioner Joseph Marie said the project is set to be advertised in the spring and construction should begin by late summer or early fall next year. The station is expected to be completed in 2012.

Major John M. Picard was unable to attend the event, but Commissioner of Planning and Development Eileen Buckheit said the announcement was great news for the city.

"We have been waiting for this announcement and are absolutely thrilled," she said. Buckheit said the new commuter station will go a long way in revitalizing the surrounding neighborhood and larger community of West Haven.

State Rep. Stephen Dargan, D-West Haven, and state Sen. Gayle Slossberg, D-Milford, also attended the news conference and welcomed the funding. Continued...

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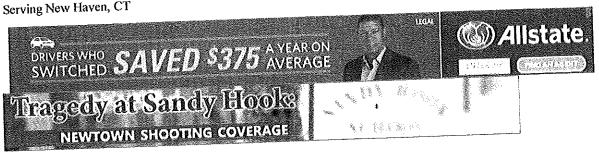
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West Haven train station work on track; may come in under budget (video)

Published: Tuesday, April 17, 2012

WEST HAVEN — The long-awaited train station is now taking shape and may even come in under budget.

Construction crews have erected steel supports for buildings on either side of the tracks. Though development began in 2010, workers were until recently only completing ground work, said Michael Mercuriano, chairman of the West Haven Train Station

"It's fantastic to see, and it's going to be such a benefit to the city forever," said Mercuriano, who began leading a grass-roots effort about 12 years ago to build a station.

[&]quot;The city has needed transportation and economic development for years. That's the key. People are going to come in, spend

West Haven train station work on track; may come in under budget (vide... http://www.nhregister.com/articles/2012/04/17/news/metro/doc4f8ce5...

money and be looking for housing," he said.

Trains are continuing to speed through the site, past workers and equipment, giving those on board a glimpse of the future Metro-North stop. It will be between Hood Terrace and Railroad Avenue near Sawmill Road.

Construction is being completed by Manafort Brothers of Plainville. Metro-North is upgrading the tracks, overhead wires and a signaling system.

According to state Department of Transportation spokesman Judd Everhart, construction is on track to be completed in 2013.

The state Bond Commission approved \$103 million for construction and inspection in 2009, but not all of the funding may be used, Everhart said.

Construction bids came in lower than anticipated, and it appears the work may total \$80.36 million.

"We attribute that to the fact that contractors are 'hungry' for work and are bidding aggressively," Everhart said via email.

The station construction is expected to cost \$41.35 million, while track reconstruction will run the state \$33.68 million and inspection costs will be \$5.33 million, Everhart said.

The state has also spent another \$25.2 million from bonds that had been approved earlier for property acquisition and engineering, he said.

The outlines of multiple floors can now be seen in the support structures of the two buildings, which will have glass and brick exteriors.

The two buildings will be connected by a pedestrian bridge and offer two concessions and a kiosk, according to Mercuriano.

Platforms the length of about 11 train cars will later be built on both sides of the tracks.

About 660 parking spaces, grassy areas, benches, landscaping and sidewalks are included on design plans in a trailer at the construction site.

A garage with 300 to 400 spaces had initially been included in the proposal, but was eliminated a few years ago because it was thought to be too expensive, Everhart said.

"It could, some day, be added back to the project, but there are no plans for that at this time," he said.

Mercuriano said his committee fought to keep the garage in the plans and will continue to lobby for its inclusion.

Some city officials recently received safety training that allowed them to walk on the site with project workers, according to Planning and Development Commissioner Meredith Allen.

Allen added that as the completion date nears, the city, Chamber of Commerce and DOT will hold meetings for area businesses and the public to explain further details of the train station.

Mayor John M. Picard said the progress is "exciting."

"You can see the physical construction happening. What I've been told by everybody is it's on schedule, and we're looking forward to it," he said.

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METRO NORTH NEW HAVEN RAIL COMMUTER COUNCIL

(Established in 1985 under Connecticut Public Act 85-239, now Sections 13b-212b and 13b -212c of the Connecticut General Statutes)

MINUTES OF APRIL 21, 2010 GRAYBAR BUILDING AT GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Present were: Jim Cameron, Chairman; Bob Jelley, Drew Todd, Jack Testani, John Hartwell, Terri Cronin, Connor Murphy, Jeff Maron, and Jeff Steele, members of the Council; Jim Redecker and Gene Colonese, DOT; George Okvat, Joe Kanell, Phil Diaz, Bob MacLagger and John Hogan, Metro North Railroad; Martin Cassidy, Stamford Advocate; John Austin, member of the public.

The Minutes of the February meeting were approved. There was no March meeting.

BAR CARS

Jim Cameron raised the matter of the April 20th New York Times article stating that bar cars were likely to be discontinued on the New Haven line. He said that it was clear that the old rehabilitated bar cars would continue to be used on trains made up of old cars. He went on to ask Jim Redecker what the situation was for new bar cars. Mr. Redecker said that Kawasaki was presently pricing new M-8 bar car designs, and that the DOT would make a decision about buying new bar cars when it received Kawasaki's pricing. Jeff Maron asked Mr. Redecker to furnish a picture of the bar car design that was being priced, and Mr. Redecker said he would do so.

FARE HIKE

Mr. Redecker, in answer to a question, said that there was no change in the plans for a fare hike. No hearings have yet been scheduled.

SERVICE CUTS

Mr. Redecker said that the Governor continues to oppose cutting the three trains that Metro North has proposed cutting. Robert MacLagger said that lawyers on both sides were studying the question of the proposed service cuts.

M-8 CARS

Mr. Redecker reported that six cars are in New Haven being tested, and two more cars are somewhere between Baltimore and New Haven. He confirmed that no cars have yet to be tested under power. He said that testing remained on schedule to put some new trains in service by the end of 2010.

vlinutes: April 2010

NEW LONDON SERVICE ON SHORE LINE EAST

Mr. Redecker reported that one new train in each direction had been added to New London service, and three more trains in each direction would be added on May 10. He said that a midday train in each direction had been postponed until some bridge work has been completed. He said that there was a two-year commitment to monitor the additional trains and their affect on boating. He said there was no weekend service planned for this summer.

DOT STAFF

Mr. Cameron asked whether the State's financial situation was going to result in forced retirement of additional DOT employees. Mr. Redecker said that he did not know whether a cut in State employment would affect the DOT, but he pointed out that 35% of the DOT staff was eligible to retire within the next five years.

STAMFORD TRANSPORTATION STUDY AND THE STAMFORD GARAGE

Mr. Cameron reported that he and John Hartwell had attended Stamford's public hearing on its new transportation plan. He said that among other things, there was talk of extending the Stamford station platforms at each end with new garages near the new ends of the platforms and up and over structures directly from the new garages to the two ends of the extended platforms. He said that part of the argument for that solution to the garage problem was to spread out passengers over the full length of the platforms. . . a problem perhaps more easily solved by extending platform canopies. That concept envisioned using the present old garage space for some other kind of building. Mr. Redecker said that the reason the DOT is waiting on the City's transportation study, is because the DOT wants to know what the City's priorities are. But he added that there was no real pricing on any of the City's proposals. He went on to say that the DOT's priority in the railroad station area is a new garage.

Jeff Maron raised once again the question of the issues raised after the early December walkthrough of the old and new garages. Gene Colonese said that the garage manager was putting in some additional stop signs, as discussed in December. He also said that the garage manager had considered eliminating some parking spaces in order to provide better site lines at intersections but that the DOT was concerned about the loss of spaces. Mr. Colonese also said that he would be sure that we got the promised write-up from the garage manager of things to be done as a result of the walkthrough.

DANBURY LINE

Mr. Redecker said that the project for putting signals on the Danbury line was moving forward. He reminded the Council that starting in August there will be midday buses on the Danbury line.

Mr. Cameron asked about the recent collision on the Danbury line. Joe Kanell said that one train on a side track protruded slightly on the operating track and was hit by a passing train. There were no injuries, and \$20,000 worth of damage to one car. He said that the cause of the accident was still being investigated.

GREENWICH TIE REPLACEMENT

It was reported that the reason for replacing concrete ties in Greenwich that were installed in the 1990's is that they were defective. They are being replaced with new concrete ties.

WEST HAVEN RAILROAD STATION

Mr. Cameron asked why the planned 1,100 car garage was not going to be built as part of the building of a new West Haven station. Mr. Redecker said that not building the garage and replacing it with a 700 car service lot had been mutually agreed upon with the Town. He said that the Town wanted to first consider a parking facility as part of Transit Oriented Development.

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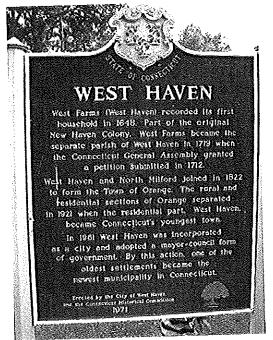
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Metro News

West Haven train station garage may get another look

By Susan Misur

Posted: 02/01/2013 12:51 AM



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WEST HAVEN — Though the state scrapped plans for a parking garage at the West Haven train station years ago — a move that eliminated 300 to 400 spots — the idea has resurfaced.

The legislature's Transportation Committee on Monday will consider a bill to study parking needs at the Metro-North commuter station under construction and the feasibility of building a garage through public funds or a private-public partnership.

If the measure passes, it will likely need additional approvals from state officials.

Ed O'Brien, former City Council chairman and mayoral candidate, recently approached state lawmakers who represent West Haven about re-examining the issue.

State Rep. Paul Davis, D-Orange, and state Sen. Gayle Slossberg, D-Milford, are proposing

the bill to the Transportation Committee.

"I'm glad they're actually taking it up since it's going to be gridlock there when it opens," O'Brien said Thursday. "We need more parking. I hear there are waiting lists at other stations."

Original plans for the train station included the garage, which was expected to not only help West Haven, but also mitigate parking problems at nearby stations.



But a few years ago, the state Department of Transportation told the city it would build a station with no garage or not build a station at all because of the garage cost, according to Mayor John M. Picard.

"It would be another \$25 to \$30 million. We're even better off letting the private sector do a garage and the public sector do the train station. ... So let's see after it opens if there is a need for a parking garage, and then let's have the private sector build it," Picard said.

He added that if a private business builds either a garage or an extra parking lot, it would pay taxes to the city, while the state would not, and that a parking study may not be the best use of state dollars.

He suggested that if any more money is spent related to the train station project, it should go toward streetscape work to "connect the train station to Main Street."

The \$80 million train station is expected to open this summer with about 685 spots in a ground parking lot and came about through a grassroots effort launched about 12 years ago with the help of resident Michael Mercuriano.

Since the garage was yanked from final plans, Mercuriano has continued supporting the idea and expects to speak at a hearing Monday in Hartford.

A hearing on the bill is likely to be held, although it's up to the committee chairman.

"It's fantastic that we're revisiting it because it's very, very much needed," Mercuriano said. "The inception of the whole project was based on getting cars off the road and getting more people to use mass transit. And there aren't enough parking spaces, especially on the Metro-North New Haven line."

The train station is expected to usher in a new wave of economic activity for West Haven, which is another reason O'Brien said more parking is needed. But he said he feels Picard has waited too long to push for development around the train station and for parking.

However, Picard said it's important to involve the private sector, and that the government can't do everything for the project because it indirectly would still be paid for by local taxpayers.

For Davis, proposing the bill means reminding the state about original plans for the garage and a need for parking, since some people were concerned about the garage's elimination. He said that if a study is eventually approved, it should start after the station opens and parking spaces are being used.

Slossberg said in a prepared statement the station needs to be "as commuter-friendly as

CONCEPTUAL - WEST HAVEN TRAIN STATION

